

**Subject:** How To Request Sign Language Interpreting Services

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MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees in the Washington DC Area

FROM: Terri L. Bell  
Acting Director, Civil Rights Office

SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR REQUESTING A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

The law requires that Federal employees and applicants for employment with disabilities receive reasonable accommodation regarding access to meetings, interviews, presentations, training and other group events that are integral to the employment experience. The law further states that all Federally sponsored or facilitated meetings, conferences, presentations and programs to which members of the public are invited or admitted shall be accessible to people with disabilities. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) contract with Birnbaum Interpreting Services (BIS) is intended to provide such accommodation in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Under the contract BIS provides professional sign language interpreters for individual employees, small groups, and agency functions. So that the contractor may continue to provide the best possible service, we would like to remind everyone of the procedures for requesting a sign language interpreter.

A BIS interpreter will be on duty at SSMC 3, room 10509, Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. To schedule an appointment, please contact the sign language interpreter's desk at 301-713-0982(tty), 301-713-0500(voice) or 301-713-0983(FAX) or send an electronics request to Interpreter <[Interpreter@noaa.gov](mailto:Interpreter@noaa.gov)>.

NOAA employees in the Hoover Building may call 202-482-2030(tty), 202-482-4481(voice) or 202-482-5357(FAX).

Please note that the person in charge of setting up the meeting should call the interpreter to schedule an appointment. When calling, please give the following information:

- the type of event (e.g., staff meeting, performance appraisal, town hall meeting, etc.)
- the date, time and location of the event as well as its expected duration. Events or meetings in excess of 2 hours will require the services of two interpreters.

In order to avoid scheduling conflicts, \*please arrange for interpreting services two weeks in advance\*. Failure to give advance notice may not guarantee that an Interpreter will be available. We realize that last minute meetings are sometimes necessary and every effort will be made to honor those requests.

In the event of a cancellation, please contact the Interpreter as soon as possible so that the time slot may be made available to other users.

I hope this clarifies the procedure for arranging for interpreting services. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call the NOAA Civil Rights Office at 301-713-0982(tty) or 301-713 0500(voice).

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